

indicators linked to interventions that improve health outcomes, such as those suggested in table 5, could be an important adjunct if used in interactive practice or primary care group educational meetings.<sup>43</sup> Primary care group indicators should be based on robust evidence. If not, their use is unlikely to lead to improved health outcomes. Our method may be a complementary way of identifying areas for performance indicators to those proposed by the NHS Executive and Department of Health. Our suggested indicators are more likely to help turn evidence into everyday practice and to have an impact on the population's health.

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## Endpiece

### The philosopher and the chicken

A story is told about Sir Isaac Newton when he was living in London toward the end of his life. His intimate friend Dr. [William] Stukel[e]y, who had been deputy to Dr. [Edmond] Halley as secretary to the Royal Society, was one day shown into Sir Isaac's dining-room, where his dinner had been for some time served up. Dr. Stukel[e]y waited for a considerable time, and getting impatient, he removed the cover from a chicken, which he ate, replacing the bones under the cover. In a short time Sir Isaac entered the room, and after the usual compliments sat down to his dinner, but on taking off the cover, and seeing nothing but bones, he remarked, "How absent we philosophers are. I really thought that I had not dined."

*Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge,*  
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